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STATEMENT BY JOSÉ RAMOS HORTA, SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MAUBERE RESISTANCE (CNRM)

In the early hours of this morning, I received information from authoritative resistance sources in Dili concerning a massacre of Timorese civilians by Indonesian troops. This took place when approximately 4000 Timorese were joined in a religious procession from Motael church to the Santa Cruz cemetary to pay tribute to a Timorese youth who had been murdered by Indonesian troops two weeks earlier. As the crowd converged on the cemetary Indonesian troops, armed with machine guns, opened fire indiscriminately, killing and wounding civilians.

I cannot put a precise figure on the the number of dead but the number of casualties appears to be about 100. Bodies were thrown into army trucks and taken to the outskirts of Dili and to the military hospital. Many Timorese have been arrested, beaten and tortured.

Two foreign journalists, who I prefer not to name because as yet their identification is not 100% certain, have been beaten and detained. A third foreign journalist has taken refuge at Bishop Belo's residence.

A separate group of Timorese marched from Motael church to the Hotel where the UN Special Reporteur on Torture is staying, hoping to meet with him. However the hotel is surrounded by hundreds of Indonesian troops.

On behalf of the CNRM I appeal to solidarity organizations, human rights groups, Churches, students and academic bodies, parliamentarians and governments, to denounce this monstrous action by the Indonesian military. I appeal to the industrialized countries to take punitive action against Indonesia, namely in the form of an arms embargo. I have called on the Portuguese Government to take initiatives with a view to having a UN Security Council meeting on East Timor. In the next few hours the President of the Portuguese Republic, Dr Mário Soares, will issue a statement. I will meet this afternoon with the Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament to brief him and to discuss action by the Portuguese Parliament which I believe will be taken in the next 48 hours. The European Community is being urged to make a stand and I believe it will make a statement shortly.

The Resistance in East Timor is considering appropriate action to defend itself. I appeal to you all to be on the alert for developments.